

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Cor 4:7-17

Three things common in those who contemplate suicide: Experience of unbearable pain, interpersonal alienation and hopelessness.

2 Cor 4:7

This treasure: Wealth; Deposit. Light given by Holy Spirit

In earthen vessels: Clay pots. Containers made out of common ordinary dirt. Valuable gems stored in beautiful containers.

The treasure of Gospel put into hands of men ...

There is nothing in our being that adds anything to the beauty of the treasure inside our vessels.

Their value was not in the type of vessels they were but in what they contained.

We are vessels of clay fashioned by the potter

Isa 64:8 Rom 9:21 Jer 18:4

excellency: supereminence; pre-eminence-abundance, (far more) exceeding, beyond (out of) measure.

of the power: dunamis, force, miraculous power, ability, abundance, might, strength, mighty (wonderful) work.

may be of God, and not of us. This valuable treasure is contained in a very cheap and fragile container, our bodies.

2 Chr 20:12 Psa 127:1 Jer 10:23 *John* 3:27 John 15:5 2 Cor 3:5

1 Chr 29:12 Job 26:12

1. God made us this way so He can use us for His Glory

Acts 9:15 :

Vital that have a right understanding of who we are and who He is.

Psa 139:13-16

2. We must be fit for use.

Clean, pure, holy, sanctified. 2 Tim 2:20-21

Wiersbe: *We are vessels so that God might use us. We are earthen vessels so that we might depend on God's power and not our own.*

1 Sam 2:30

3. We must focus on the treasure and not on the vessel.

1 Tim 1:11

God is glorified through weak vessels.

J. Hudson Taylor, *All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for god because they reckoned on Him being with them.*

In order for us to be at the place where we are useable vessels God has to put us through the crucible of suffering.

Wiersbe: *Sometimes God permits our vessels to be jarred so that some of the treasure will spill out and enrich others. Suffering reveals not only the weakness of man but also the glory of God.*

I See Myself

*One day I looked at myself.
At the self that Christ can see;
I saw the person I am today
and the one I ought to be.*

*I saw how little I really pray.
How little I really do;
I saw the influence of my life-
How little of it was true!*

*I saw the bundle of faults and fears
I ought to lay on the shelf;
I had given a little bit to God,
But I hadn't but I hadn't given myself.*

*I came from seeing myself.
With the mind made up to be
The sort of person that Christ can use
With a heart He may always see.*

2 Cor 4:8

Troubled: Afflicted, hard pressed; backed into a corner

yet not distressed: cramped, crushed, broken,
with uncertainty or doubt; bewildered

but not in despair; Don't give up or quit; to be utterly at a loss; to lose all hope

2 Cor 4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

Persecuted To be hunted down; pursued; hounded;

but not forsaken: to leave behind in some place, to desert; abandoned to the enemy, left to fend for himself

Cast down Smitten to the ground. Never to rise again; depressed

But not destroyed: Struck down but not struck out; perish, mar, die; to ruin completely; to demolish.

How Paul deal with problems/afflictions?

1. He had purpose in life.

2 Cor 4:10

The test of a true ministry is not stars, but scars.

Gal 6:17

Applied--physical death.

1 Cor 15:30 Rom 8:36

Applied—spiritually

Rom 6:6 Gal 2:20 Col 2:20

that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. Our bodies are constantly facing the threat of death just like Jesus did.

Obvious--we have real life in Christ. He protects us and gives us a supernatural peace and joy.

2 Cor 4:11

for Jesus' sake: constantly living under sentence and threat of death on account of our loyalty to Jesus. **1 Cor 4:9**

that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The resurrection life of Jesus will be made openly obvious, clearly apparent to all

mortal: liable to die; human; earthly

2 Cor 4:12

Because of our testimony for Christ ... brought to real life in Christ.

2. He lived his life in relation to the future.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 Problems he is facing now are far outweighed with eternal glory.

3. He lived his life under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:16

So What? Three things common in those who contemplate suicide: Experience of unbearable pain, interpersonal alienation and hopelessness.

1. Realize our purpose in life—4:11

2. Live in light of eternal glory. 4:18

3. Live constantly yielded to Holy Spirit 4:16